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Yu. Martov's Youth and Its Relation to the Jews in Marxism

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Biographies of Karl Marx and critiques on Marxism are plentiful, and no less abundant are accounts of Jewish literature, economic life, and history. Yet the author need not apologize for looking anew at these thoroughly investigated topics. For although Marxism and Judaism are usually seen as parallel developments which are related only under very special conditions, a review of their histories in the course of the nineteenth century reveals certain facts which belie a merely passing relationship between Marxism and the Jews. More specifically, it is apparent that Jews in a variety of environments participated in avowedly socialist or Marxist groups in numbers which exceeded their proportional representation in the population at large. In other words, the Jews were forced into, or attracted by, the radical movements more readily than members of other groups.[1]

At first glance, the scope of the study seems quite broad. Judaism has a history of over two thousand years, and Marxism has had its adherents for over a century. To complicate matters, it is possible to trace "socialism" back to the Mosaic Law or further.[2] On the other hand, if one takes the 1870's as the beginning of wide-spread (if not

[1] Leopold H. Haimson, The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism, Harvard University Press, 1955, p. 60.

[2] Alexander Gray, The Socialist Tradition from Moses to Lenin, Longmans, Green and Company, 1948.

popular) acceptance of Marxian doctrines[3] and the 1890's as marking the beginning of its decline[4], the proportions do not seem unmanageable. Somewhere between the extremes of the long and short views lies the solution; it is possible to define the problem of "Jewish Marxism" without undue complications simply because Marx as well as a great many Jews derived their inspirations from common sources in the Age of Reason. Not many years before Karl Marx was born, the Jewish people throughout Europe were confronted with the discrepancies between the intellectual achievements of the Revolutionary Era and the shocking but understandable failure of the ideals for which so many men, including the Jews, had died. The echoes of freedom and visions of equality died quickly for most Europeans in the post-Revolutionary generation, but among the Jews nothing could stamp out the dream that some day all men would be treated as human beings.

The terminal point of the study is not as easily marked. World War I suggests itself as a dramatic, abrupt break with the nineteenth-century traditions, but even if it can be demonstrated that the historical conditions for the rise of Marxism were no longer relevant as early as the

[3]George Lichtheim, Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study, Frederich A. Praeger, 1962, p. 203.

[4]Jacques Barzun, Darwin, Marx, Wagner, Little, Brown and Company, 1941, p. 134.

1890's, the fact remains that Marxian theories still receive more than mere lip-service. Particularly arresting is the consideration that among contemperary proponents of menshevism (i.e., orthodox Marxism) there is still a disportionate representation of Jewish intellectuals.[5] If indeed the historical conditions which nurtured Marxist ideology belong to the last century, it is reasonable to assume that "Jewish socialism" embodies certain enduring qualities which are independent of material environments. At the same time, it is tempting to point to the exodus of Jewish intellectuals from Russia following the Bolshevik success in order to demonstrate the Jews' adherence to the essentially humanitarian aspects of Marxism and their disillusionment with the failure of these ideals in the Communist state. It is interesting to note, however, that as late as 1926 a high proportion of Jews had chosen to remain in the party of the Bolsheviks.[6] The only conclusion to be drawn at this point is that no simple interpretation is possible.

The prominence of Jewish revolutionaries in Central and Eastern Europe tends to support the view that the Jews who revolted against state and society did so because of

[5]Bertram D. Wolfe, Three Who Made A Revolution, Beacon Press, 1961, p. 186.

[6]Solomon M. Schwarz, The Jews in the Soviet Union, Syracuse University Press, 1951, p. 261-262.

the autocratic oppression which blocked their national-cultural development, humiliated them with degrading restrictions and drove them into protestant groups. As Merle Fainsod says of Russia, "By damming up the constitutional channels for the expression of social grievances, they (the Tsars) helped create a situation in which popular disaffection overflowed into revolutionary turbulence."[7] This description of the general political conditions prevailing in nineteenth-century Russia provides the context for the revolt of the Jews, but being general, it can not account for their over-representation among the revolutionaries. Dubnow suggests a rather mechanical explanation that participation of the Jews in radical movements was small in proportion to the severity of the state-supported, anti-semitic violence which fell upon the Russian Jews after 1880:

> True, the Jews supplied the revolutionary army with a larger number of fighters than was warranted by their numerical proportion to the rest of the Russian population. Yet their number was insignificant when compared with the atrocities which were constantly perpetrated against them.[8]

As the discriminatory laws multiplied and the programs destroyed life and property, the Jews could stand no more

[7] Merle Fainsod, How Russia Is Ruled, Harvard University Press, 1961, p. 5.

[8] Semen Markovich Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland (3 Volumes), 1916-1920, Jewish Publication Society of America, Volume III, p. 67.

abuse and began to return violence for violence. But this type of reaction, a rage which leads to physical reprisals, does not need a theory of revolution or a philosophy of history for its growth or sustenance. The "self-defense" groups which arose spontaneously in Odessa and other southern cities subjected to the pogroms needed no party organization or doctrine to justify their actions. The Jews who organized or joined these temporary battalions for self-preservation ignored socialistic ideals and remained with the fold of Judaism. For example, six young Jews were tried in court martial, 'For having participated in a conspiracy having for its object the overthrow of the existing order by means of arming the Jewish proletariat for an attack upon the police and troops.' In this case and others, says Dubnow, the habit of the government in associating the Jews with the revolutionary movement obscured the actuality that these "...members of a self-defense group [intended] nothing beyond defending life and property...."[9]

At the opposite extreme of simplicity it is a plausible explanation that those Jews who entered the revolutionary ranks were in fact lost to Judaism, having renounced their Jewish religion and communities. The most obvious case in point is Karl Marx himself, who had been baptized at the age of six and was educated as a Christian. The fact that

[9] Ibid., p. 150-1.

Marx subsequently denounced all religion as a hindrance to the development of true consciousness removes him further from any connection with Judaism. There are many other similar cases of individual Jews turning revolutionaries and rejecting Judaism, with as many varieties of circumstance as there were converts. On the other hand, The New Jewish Encyclopedia is satisfied that Karl Marx, along with Moses Hess and others, retained enough of his ancestry or spiritual inheritance to be included among the note-worthy Jews in history.[10]

Aside from revealing some of the difficulties involved in using the term Jew, the life of Karl Marx is instructive in a different way. It shows clearly that academic or legal definitions were perhaps much less important than the fact that Jews were and still are identified largely by family ties, even if it means only that they were born to "Jewish" parents who in turn may have only tenuous links with their family or origin. This pervasive social definition haunted the Jews throughout the nineteenth century. Although society in this way recognized intuitively the conserving force of the Jewish family, such an all-inclusive definition made it nearly impossible for assimilation*, the very goal which the

[10] David Bridger, et al. (ed.), The New Jewish Encyclopedia, Behrman House, Inc., 1962, p. 308.

*Hannah Arendt defines assimilation as "acceptance by non-Jewish society", social life being distinguished from political life. Jewishness defined by family of origin later became perverted by racism; nowhere have the dangers of habitual prejudice of society been revealed so pointedly.

nation demanded, to proceed with any degree of success. In order to understand the role of the Jews in the revolutionary movement and the meaning of Marxism for these "eternal pariahs", it is first necessary to consider their peculiar social status in the nineteenth century.

In speaking of "the Jews" one must be cautious in reducing them to a single, homogeneous group. Like other social entities, the various Jewish communities were subjected continuously to environmental pressures which varied considerably according to the time and place.[11] This consideration becomes especially relevant as one traces the history of the Jewish communities through the nineteenth century. The complexity of ideals concerning the goals of Israel increases as one approaches the twentieth century; although this may be due to the nearness in time which reveals the more subtle variations, there can be no doubt that the century following the French Revolution saw a prolific flowering of Jewish literature and a vitality of intellectual "enterprise" unequalled in the history of the Jews. If the aspirations of the Jews have been continually modified during the many years of living in the Diaspora, never before had change been introduced with such consciousness of relinquishing the incubus of past traditions. The light of Reason began late

[11] Werner Sombart, The Jews and Modern Capitalism, the Free Press, 1951, Intro. by Bert F. Hoselitz, p. xxviii-xxx.

in the eighteenth century to penetrate the inner recesses of Judaism and to set in motion processes of creativity and reform which were to have a profound significance for all Jews.

An essential, enduring source of conflict and distrust between Jews and their social environment is the psychological fact of "separateness". Until the French Revolution opened the question of complete emancipation, there had been no urge from either Jews or non-Jews for destroying the wall between Judaism and Christian society. The rise of the nation-state, with the requisite citizenship under uniform laws, threatened to undermine whatever privileges certain categories of Jews had accumulated from the State during the past two or three centuries. These class-privilege survivals in European states, which were based upon the usefulness of the Jewish banker and financier to the government, provided an institutionalized separateness which divided the Jews, at least implicitly, into the "good" and the "bad".[12] Everywhere in Europe, the heightening of national and democratic consciousness presented the Jews with the choice of either remaining outside society, confined by numerous restrictions, or rejecting their past and future as Jews for the "rights of citizenship". For all the Jews, equality was a double-edged sword.

For many Jews, Moses Mendelssohn had supplied the most

[12] Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, Meridian Books, 1959, pp. 11-28.

reasonable guide to assimilation. Mendelssohn held that Judaism must be viewed not as a religion, which is a personal decision for the individual's conscience, but rather as "revealed legislation". Only the commandments from God were binding and then only through a man's conscience. In addition, he urged the Jews to discard antiquated laws which were mere "national" survivals of a lost past.[13] Mendelssohn's program for assimilation of Jews into their surrounding culture, a peculiar combination of "civic emancipation and fidelity to Judaism", was hardly acclaimed throughout the temples of orthodoxy. The obverse side of the Christian hatred of the peculiarities of the Jews was an equally adamant fear of pollution from the outside world. When Mendelssohn said that, "...everyone in the state who is obedient to civil government ought to be free to pray to God after his own fashion or after that of his forefathers..."[14], he failed to recognize that separateness was satisfying for both the Christian and a great majority of Jews. His implied aim of equal, but not separate, social, intellectual, and religious status for Jews could not but result in a profound hostility among the leaders of Judaism.

Freedom of religious belief, the one "concession" Mendelssohn gave to Judaism, was hardly consonant with

[13] Max Margolis and Alexander Marx, A History of the Jewish People, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945, p. 598.

[14] Ibid., p. 599.

traditional Judaism. No religion, in fact, can admit that any other system of belief must be allowed the same hearing as itself on the grounds that both might have equal claims to the Truth. In order to remain a vital force in the lives of men, each religion must maintain a sacred realm of certain dogma which are beyond the reach of critical discussion. To the extent that the boundaries of these dogma spread to encompass more and more the activities of human living, the system tends toward increasing "closedness", i.e., it becomes intolerant of both dissent and adaptation to environments.

Judaism by the eighteenth century had acquired innumerable traditional customs and laws, at the center ofwhich was the institution of Rabbi (teacher). In the Diaspora, the Rabbi fulfilled the functions of spiritual, social, legal, and intellectual leader of the community. By this traditional practice, observance of the Law (Torah) had led to an amassing of laws and customs which challenged even the most learned Rabbi's comprehension. The Law, as burdensome as it had become, was inseparable from orthodox Judaism and could not be displaced by civil law which must inevitably accompany citizenship. Those who advocated treating the Jews as one religious sect among many ignored the firmly entrenched laws and observances of the Jews. Political emancipation and its attendant obligations meant government by one law, the law of the Christian state. In this way, the bulwark of the Jewish

laws, the Rabbi, was threatened with extinction, or at least a severe decline in status, should the Jews exchange the old Law for the new-fangled laws of the nation-state.

The desire to reform this sometimes incomprehensible traditional law was not limited to a few, enlightened German-Jewish intellectuals in Berlin. Two generations before Mendelssohn advocated his modern reforms, the excess of "scholasticism" among the Eastern Rabbis, especially in Poland, provoked the revolt of Baalshem Tov and his followers (Chassidim).[15] The "Pious", as they were called, felt a spiritual void arising from Rabbinical intellectualism and began to seek emotional security in direct union with God. Their intermediaries had failed to notice often enough and sincerely enough the needs of the people. The subsequent perversion of Baalshem's ideals by the Zaddikism (they came to worship their Zaddik, or leader) could not discourage the Chassidim, who by the end of the nineteenth century numbered about a half-million souls, settled primarily in south-eastern Europe.[16] This "reformation" was unsupported by special economic or political circumstances, but it still retained a vital influence among the uneducated the the youth.

[15] Solomon Schechter, Studies in Judaism, Meridian Books, Inc., and Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960, p. 152 ff.

[16] Ibid., p. 159.

Instead of a true reforming of the practices of Judaism, rabbi-worship was eventually heightened, with communities and families divided into warring factions.[17]

Occasions for disunity among the Jews were numerous. In addition to the conflicts of Hasidim (the usual rendering of Chassidim), orthodoxy, and enlightenment, there were the Jewish tax collectors and supervising commissions which forever harassed the Russian Jews.[18] A similar resentment was felt by the intellectual Jews against those privileged Jews for whose services the governments were willing to grant certain privileges.[19] It is not surprising to find that nowhere were the Jews able to present a united front against antisemitism. Although all claimed a permanent bond with Judaism, each group had to face the challenges of its environments on its own terms. The reactions to discrimination varied from outright defiance of authority by revolutionary groups to the daring affirmation of Jewish superiority and proud individuality of Samuel R. Hirsch.[20]

In France, where the burden of oppression had not returned after the Revolution, the Jews did not fall into religious quarrels which divided the communities of their eastern brothers. The graciousness of the French was repaid

[17] Leo W. Schwarz (ed.), Memoirs of My People, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945, pp. 233-242.

[18] Ibid., pp. 272-274.

[19] Arendt, op. cit., pp. 62-64.

[20] Margolis and Marx, op. cit., pp. 663-664.

by the Jews with an almost a-religious attitude: the worst fears of the orthodox Jews were realized in the rather tepid participation in the traditions of Judaism.[21] Cremieux was the leader and model for the French Jews, who in spite of their compromise with the Christian state, retained a benevolent, if sentimental, attitude to their less fortunate brothers to the East. Not until the dawn of the twentieth century revealed the weakness of the Jews' position in society did the French Jew feel the terrible potential of antisemitism.

German Jews had slowly gained economic prominence and, with the coming of the Empire, a degree of political freedom. Still, the medieval categories of Emperor and aristocracy loomed as sinister reminders that enlightenment was purely a matter for individuals. Here too the gratitude of the Jews included their adopting the German nation as their fatherland. Like the Jews in France and England, the German Jews were relatively isolated from the great majority of the Jews to the East and South and were subject much more both to external pressure of discrimination and to the influence of the surrounding culture. The range of choices was wide--from conversion and inter-marriage to faithfulness to Judaism with its attendant restrictions--but whatever the path taken, the Jew remained a Jew by social definition.

[21] Ibid., p. 643.

The Germany of Karl Marx's time was in many ways unchanged by the time of the Empire. Most important for the Jews was their admission to educational facilities and economic life. At the universities the Jews could develop the skills of argumentation so highly valued by Jewish communities; success in the professions or financial world opened many otherwise closed doors in society. Added to the young Jew's inclination to excel scholastically was the very real social incentive for the assimilated Jew to demonstrate his exceptional status in regard to other Jews, i.e., to show that although he was a Jew he was quite unlike ordinary Jews.[22]

More important than this single incident, which is but a symptom of a deeper ill, was the insecurity of the German Jew. Their privileges were granted, not won by a fundamental change of attitude by society. Men of Jewish origin were still not accepted as equal. All the affirmations of their loyalty to Germany first and to their new-found religion could not erase the stigma of guilt by association. It was not so much the Jew who was "pushed around" because he remained faithful to the creed of his ancestors, but rather the Jew who no longer could claim in good conscience adherence to any belief except self-betterment who suffered most. More accurately, his children were subject to the most difficult

[22]Arendt, op. cit., p. 56.

of challenges. The so-called converted Jew could offer little to the emotional needs of the developing personalities of the younger generation precisely because he had compromised his self-respect in the process of reaching for emancipation. If Heinrich Marx played a dual role, it was for his sensitive and critical son no role at all. Karl Marx rejected Christianity, Judaism, and German citizenship, probably because none of these was actually available to him as the son of a converted Jew. Nor was an ambiguous uncertainty suitable for his strong personality. From the very beginning the young Marx was forced to create his own identity, i.e., his own view of life.

Karl Marx was certainly not a typical Jew or revolutionary, but neither was his problem or his reaction to it entirely unique. The French Revolution had affected most quickly those Jews who were closest to its center, but its force was not spent in one, exhausting explosion. The momentum of its ideals were not to be stopped by political, religious, or social barriers. Neither the all-powerful Autocrat of Russia nor the wise and proud Rabbis of Jewish Orthodoxy could turn back the persistent flow of Enlightenment in its push to the East. The Russian Jews were not to be exempt from the challenge: how it was met is the subject of the following chapter.

I

In marked contrast to the Western Jews were those of the Eastern communities. Russia had inherited the great majority of the Jewish people by the partitioning of Poland, and from the first Tsar initiated a policy of strict quarantine. The Pale of Settlement defined the boundaries of the Jews' freedom, preventing even a physical assimilation or intermixing with the Russian population. Within the Pale economic and social conditions gradually worsened as the Jewish population increased, new restrictions were added, and the boundaries of the Pale were further constricted. Huddled in the cities and towns, large numbers of Jewish tailors, shoemakers, and cabinet makers struggled to advance socially or to merely subsist. Although their community life remained distinct from that of their Christian neighbors, internal stresses tended to appear readily under the continuous oppression by the government. The Hasidim and the orthodox Jews lived side by side, yet neither trusted the other; often relations between families assumed the proportions of a feud, with the added fury of religious convictions.[23]

One of the main sources of social betterment or economic gain was an intelligent son. The first demand of the Jewish community was a scholarly Rabbi, a position of great prestige

[23]Leo W. Schwarz, op. cit., pp. 233-242.

and comfort. Substantial dowries often accompanied the marriage of a bright young man to the daughter of a wealthy Jew. A poor tailor who saw in his son the potential of a future Rabbi advertised the intellectual prowess of his son far and wide in order to get the best offers; sometimes two marriage contracts were signed in a futile hope of a double dowry.[24] Since marriages were arranged by the parents at an early age (the child was often eleven or twelve years old), both sides assumed that the religious leanings of the couple would be identical. This was not always the case, of course, for the son might become attracted to a rival sect or merely reject all religion.

In spite of the intrigues and conflicts built into the communities of the Pale, its inhabitants remained within the fold of Judaism. The closeness of the urban setting and external oppression served well to maintain the cohesiveness of the Jews in the Pale. At the same time, the threat from without in the form of various institutions for Russification induced a tightening of the ranks among the orthodox Jews. Any thought of a compromise with the regime or of reform within was met generally by stern reprisals and threat of excommunication.[25] One of the first heralds of enlightenment, Issac Baer Levinsohn (1788-1860) was deemed a heretic, died a pauper, and

[24] Ibid., pp. 197-198.

[25] Dubnow, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 112-114.

was not redeemed until the next generation decided that reform was not so undesirable.[26] During the last decade of the reign of Nicholas I, the spirit of Mendelssohn had penetrated the confines of the Pale, but with no encouragement from the Tsar, secular learning gained few adherents. Nicholas' view of assimilation, having no base in humanitarian or democratic theories, consisted of complete conversion in belief and habit. To be sure, useful Jews were allowed outside the Pale, but these privileged few were closely regulated and isolated.

A brief period of freedom resulted from Alexander II's abortive spirit of reform, and at least in law, the Jews were in a position very similar to the Western Jews a half-century before. The torrent of relief which all Russia felt in the early 1860's ended in a Polish insurrection and increased revolutionary activity. When the Tsar became convinced that Russia was undeserving of enlightened despotism, the doors of the Pale began to close. In 1864, the privilege of acquiring land in the Pale was withdrawn for the provinces of Vilna and Kiev.[27] A law of 1865 allowed useful types of artisans to reside anywhere in the Empire, yet these were to be never free of police observation and harassment.[28] By 1871, the

[26] Ibid., pp. 125-126.

[27] Ibid., p. 173.

[28] Ibid., p. 170.

"Commission for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Jews" concluded not that reforms were needed, but that the solution to the Jewish problem would come when there were no more Jews.[29] The Autocracy had turned full circle in less than a decade, leaving only resentment and hope, a combination of emotion and ideal which once kindled to flame may destroy, as in a forest fire, or build constructively, as in a laboratory. Enlightenment came late to the Russian Jews, but its effects were no less diverse or profound than in the West.

The Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement of Russia stood as isolated as the Russian intelligentsia of the same period, for neither the masses of Jews not the Tsarist government was receptive to pleas for cultural advancement. Very few Jews were willing to ally themselves completely with their oppressor; the only relief came as more writers and historians began to transform secular learning into Jewish "Science". A veritable renaissance of scholarship was born in the interlude of co-existence of the 1860's which slowly revived the Jews' pride in their national culture and provided a base for the later development of Zionism.[30]

The government opened Jewish Crown schools and the general Russian schools in order to tempt the Jewish youths from their traditional religion. But in exposing the Jews, especially the

[29] Ibid., p. 196.

[30] Ibid., pp. 206-207.

most talented, sensitive, and creative youths, to the fascinating of secular, and often Western, learning, the Autocracy was only furthering the development of revolutionary consciousness. While in the "...inner, cultural life of Russian Jewry a radical break took place during this period..., the rapidity and intensity of their spiritual transformation...was out of all proportion to the snail-like tardiness and piecemeal character of civil emancipation in Russia."[31] Through their contact with the Russian youth, the Jews began to read and worship Chernyshevski, Herzen, Dobrolubov, Darwin, and Spencer: evolution and socialism became their passwords to the future.

The social impact among the Jews was startling:

> A tragic war ensued between 'fathers and children', a war of annihilation, for the belligerent parties were extreme obscurantiism and fanaticism, on one hand, and the negation of all historic forms of Judaism, both religious and national, on the other.[32]

The threatened disintegration of the Jewish communities took several forms. The most despicable answer to the Jewish problem was given by those who chose to assimilate completely with the Russian society. Worse yet, these "Russified" Jews often cooperated with the authorities in the further undermining of Judaism. Even the Jews in the revolutionary movement might be excused for their impatience, but the only word for the Jew

[31] Ibid., p. 206.

[32] Ibid., p. 210.

who rejected opposition in some form or other was "traitor".[33] By 1870, the lines of battle were drawn--Hasidim, orthodox, reform, assimilation and revolutionary--for the ensuing turbulence which preceeded World War I. Reflecting the social environment of Tsarist Russia, the conflicts among the Jews were more deeply felt, more bitter and more lasting than any that had disturbed the Western Jews.

In a "General Memoir", the so-called Pahlen Commission*, attempting to relieve Judaism of the stigma of revolutionary activity, demonstrated a perceptiveness not common among governmental investigating committees:

> In the course of the last twenty-five years a new accusation has been brought forward against the Jews in Russia and those outside Russia. The Jews have been found to form a considerable percentage among the champions of anarchistic and revolutionary doctrines, consisting mostly of half-educated youngsters who have drifted away from one shore and have not succeeded in reaching the other.

The "Memoir" goes on to maintain that these displaced Jews are from the "lowest classes" of Jewish society and that poverty is one of the major causes of their revolt.[34] However doubtful this last statement may be, the observation that the Jewish revolutionaries were youths who had been

[33] Ibid., pp. 211-213.

*appointed in 1883 to investigate the Jewish problem; "Memoir" was issued in 1888.

[34] Ibid., p. 364.

cut loose from their moorings and left to drift between the banks of respectable society was precisely to the point. Like Marx and Boerne in Germany[35], many young Russian Jews found no consolation in the continuous religious quarrels and personal duplicity of the older generation. Their models were drawn from the mainstream of revolutionary Russia; the gymnasium and university supplied an identity that was at least sincere, at best, a way of life and a hope for the future.

The decade of the 1860's worked a revolution in the ranks of the Jewish intelligentsia in Russia. Before the benevolent Tsar Alexander II set about to alleviate the past abuses of his people, the Jews had been bound on every side from participation in social intercourse with the neighboring Russian peoples. The Jewish attitude of spiritual superiority and their desire to carry on their peculiar way of life amidst whatever national group they found themselves contributed greatly to stimulating mistrust and hatred which was returned by the ignorant and unpredictable peasant. With the reforms of Alexander II, Jews entered the mainstreams of Russian thought, following their inclinations wherever the doors of institutions of learning were opened. Entrance was not unrestricted nor was there any guarantee that unofficial antisemitism would not place sizable social barriers to the Jews once they

[35]Arendt, op. cit., p. 65, includes an interesting discussion of antisemitism among alienated Jewish intellectuals.

were admitted to the schools. For the most part, however, the Jews made their peace with the often hostile environment, finding the limited freedom more than ample compensation for an uncomfortable feeling or personal embarrassment.

For some of these "fortunate" Jews, the path to assimilation was opened by the reforms. It was not uncommon for these ambitious Jewish youths to discard completely their burdensome past for a future in the service of the Russian state, often in the capacity of a commissioner to regulate relations between the state and the still submerged masses of the Jewish Pale. Other Jews utilized the new freedom for self-improvement and in the pursuit of enlightenment for the Jewish people. This was the tradition of the Maskilim and the reform groups among the Russian Jews. Apart from these groups of compromisers, there were some Jewish youths who found no comfort in the prospect of adjusting to the demands of Tsardom. This third stratum among the Jewish intellectuals, like their Russian counterparts, severed all contacts with acceptable society and worked to construct in their minds and in fact a new world where no one would be excluded from his share of well-being.

Within this quite small, but vocal group of Jewish revolutionaries, Yuri Osipovich Tsederbaum rose to become a close associate of those men who would lead the revolution against the impotent Tsar Nicholas II. Not long after Yuri assumed the name of Martov, he was sitting on the same platform with

Lenin, Trotsky, Akselrod, and Plekhanov, helping to formulate the answers to the urgent problems facing the Russian Marxists. Later, as spokesman for the Mensheviks, his leadership was unquestioned, yet little has been told of his early years, those formative years which in large measure draw the lines for adult life. Remembering that everyone passes through these crucial years, one may approach the study of Martov's youth with the hope that it will serve as a beginning point for considering the larger problem of the Jews in Marxism.

II

The Jews who plunged into the revolutionary study groups and party organizations could hardly be characterized as a class. No level of society failed to contribute estranged youth to the ever-growing ranks of the radical intelligentsia: David Bronstein fought the elements, his helpers and his competitors in order to establish a prosperous farm at Yankova; Yuri Osipovich Tsederbaum (Martov) was born into a family in its second generation of newspaper publishing; the father of Paul Akselrod was a tavern-keeper. The assertion that the primary source of Jewish revolutionaries was "poverty-stricken families"[36] does not hold true on closer examination.

If it is not accurate to speak of a common social-class origin for the Jewish revolutionaries, certain psychological and social characteristics do emerge from a comparison of the thoughts and feelings of the various Jews who rejected both Judaism and autocracy as satisfactory answers to their searching questions about the meaning and organization of existence. Thus, while the subject of this paper, Yu. Martov, can hardly be called typical, his life in many ways exemplifies and reflects the common grounds upon which various revolutionaries-to-be met the challenge of the Russian radical tradition.

[36] A.L.Patkin, The Origins of the Russian-Jewish Labor Movement, Melbourne, F.W.Cheshire, 1947, p. 76.

Alexander O. Tsederbaum, the grandfather of Yuri Osipovich Tsederbaum (Martov), had by the 1860's achieved a reputation in Jewish intellectual circles for his work on the popular Yiddish journals that were his inspiration. He had risen to fame by his own skill in tailoring and with a fervent desire for knowledge, moving first to Odessa, in that time the center of the Maskilim movement, then, having won the good graces of the Establishment, to Petersburg where his "Ha-Meliz" became well-known for its invigorating, challenging spirit for Jewish writers.[37] Through the long years of study and travel, he had imbibed deeply of the spirit of Enlightenment then beginning to disturb the complacency of so many Jewish intellectuals. In reconciling the old and new ideals, Alexander Tsederbaum had chosen a middle way, a road of cultural reform in Judaism.

Information concerning Yuri's father is virtually rare. Following in the wake of the illustrious Alexander Osipovich, he first pursued a career as an agent in the Far East for a commercial company in Constantinople and, after the Russo-Turkish War, he traveled to St. Petersburg in order to assist in the tasks of editing and publishing the journals of his ambitious father.[38] Whether by design or circumstance, Martov conspicuously omits mentioning his father, although in relating the experiences of his early years in revolutionary circles,

[37] Isidore Singer (ed.), The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, Funk and Wagnalls, 1907, p. 650.

[38] Yu. Martov, Zapiski sotsial demokrata, Letopis revolyutsii, No. 4 (Petersburg, Berlin, Moscow, 1922), pp. 9-10.

he is careful to include the name of anyone who had some influence on his development. Whatever the reason for this omission, throughout the Memoirs his father appears only in the distance, both physically and emotionally. Perhaps the almost continuous absence of his father during these early years was painful for the youth, but in his recollections of that time there is no resentment revealed either toward those immediately around him in the Tsederbaum household or toward the environment of the cosmopolitan cities of Constantinople and Odessa.

Among the other members of the family, Martov recalls that his grandfather's brother, Dr. Adolf Tsederbaum, was a literary figure of some note in Germany, having translated works of Turgenev into the German. He notes that considering the occupations of the older Tsederbaums, "...one might say that the literary profession was in my 'blood'."[39] Little mention is made of his siblings. Martov's older brother was bedridden, suffering from a chronic ailment until his death in the early 1880's. His younger sister and brothers, who eventually followed Martov into the Menshevik camp, were not, at least until their early teens, close to his inner world of fantasy and dreams.[40] In these early years Yuri Tsederbaum (Martov) was to rely more and more upon his fertile imagination for interpreting the relatively comfortable, yet often confusing, world of his childhood.

[39] Ibid., p. 10.

[40] Leopold H. Haimson, The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism, (Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 62n.

One of the first permanent impressions of the external world in its relation to his family came in 1881, shortly after the assassination of Alexander II. A pogrom was organized--ostensibly in reaction to the "Jewish revolutionaries" who perpetrated the evil deed--and the Tsederbaum household, without the benefit of having its male head, prepared to somehow ward off the wrathful destruction of the mobs. Martov recalls his perplexity at seeing the sobbing servant-women, the tense, solemn workers and the young men with revolvers, each with his own idea of how to meet the approaching maelstrom.[41] The terrifying force of the pogrom never reached the Tsederbaum residence, but it was then that Yuri first became aware that he belonged to a special class of people--the Jews--who were confronted at times with a very hostile world.

In the following year, after his father had arranged for the family to move to St. Petersburg, Yuri, now nine years old, was enrolled in a Petersburg gymnasium. The new environment was in sharp contrast to his rather idyllic existence in Odessa: from the coarse and "uncultured" youths to the rude, anti-semitic professors, Yuri was thrust into this uniformly unfriendly world with no defenses drawn for the challenge of being treated as a "lower race". His reaction, unlike that of the young boys of the "Jewish-bourgeoisie", was one of violent

[41] Zapiski sotsial demokrata, pp. 15-16.

rebellion. Martov remembered how the other Jews adjusted to the situation by becoming inconspicuous and as gentle as "geese", apparently ignoring the moral injustice of their situation, while he, "...brought up in a liberal and Russified milieu, was not able to surrender without a struggle".[42] It was at this gymnasium that Yuri felt his first emancipation from family supervision and discovered at least one person with whom he could share his inner world of Jules Verne's fantasies. The son of a Jewish-manufacturer, whose older sisters had already been sent into exile for revolutionary activities, Gurari was "...adroit, capable, with an imagination both daring and passionate, ever sauntering about the streets and mastering his lesson in leisure moments...--in a short while, he divested me of any manner of morality, infecting me with his dual protest against the injustice of the comrades and the authorities."[43]

This swaggering peer remained a hero for Yuri only as long as the Tsederbaums kept Yuri in this environment of coarseness. A brief interlude of relaxation occurred when his family moved to the rather unattractive city of Tsarskoe-Selo and Yuri studied at home in preparation for entrance into the seventh-form. He recalls how his father continually invited to their home members of the democratic intelligentsia, men from the

[42] Ibid., p. 27.

[43] Ibid.

professions and the army who discussed, often heatedly, Tsar Alexander III and D. Tolstoy and student "disorders".[44] Papers were read late into the night about the murder of the Tsar-Deliverer and of the five armed terrorists; but the conversations were concerned with liberal-constitutional problems: "there was not a word about socialism".[45] During this time Yuri became engrossed in the illegal books of Herzen and Shchedrin, in the events of March 1, 1881, and the history of this terrible deed. The deepest mark was evidently made by his reading, often all night, of Herzen's memoirs: "Thus I learned the 'facts and thoughts', the reading of which disturbed all the fibers of my mind, and I learned to hate passionately Tsarism and Romanovs".[46] New heros filled his inner world, heros of the long tradition of Russian radicalism. By the age of fifteen he had tasted of the spirit of the people and their striving for freedom.

The gymnasium at Tsarskoe-Selo might have been a repetition of his earlier experience in the rude atmosphere of the anti-semitism had it not been for Yuri's heightened interest in history. The one course in which he emerged from a "very secluded and cautious" living was in legal history given by a G. B. Forster, who inspired Yuri to read indiscriminately

[44] Ibid., p. 35.

[45] Ibid., p. 36.

[46] Ibid.

everything related to ancient and modern history.[47] These years, which are often called the low point of the Russian revoltuionary movement, were for Yuri, as for many other future leaders of protest, years of preparation for the coming struggle. With this knowledge of history, with a vague understanding of and an acute interest in the events of 1881, and with the memories of hatred and bigotry, Yuri moved from childhood to adolescence, from years of awakening to years of consciousness.

When in the autumn of 1889, Yuri's father decided to return to St. Petersburg to continue his newspaper work, the whole family, and especially Yuri, breathed a "sigh of relief" from the oppressiveness of provincial crudeness and boredom. "The very atmosphere of the class--I was still in seventh form--was by far more sympathetic than that of Tsarskoe-Selo."[48] This time his father chose, or was allowed to choose, a gymnasium populated with sons of the intellectual elite whose interests and cultural level coincided with that of young Tsederbaum. Yuri soon became acquainted with new comrades who shared his ardor for political discussion and his "revolutionary frame of mind" and who accepted him on terms of equality and respect. One of these new comrades was N. Kranigfeld*, who was at that time in the field of the Narodolstvii: "There arose between

[47] Ibid., p. 39.

[48] Ibid., p. 40.

*Kranigfeld later married Martov's sister, who also entered the ranks of the Mensheviks.

us...a life-long friendship, which endured until he was cut down at the beginning of 1914..., to the last day Kranigfeld remained a faithful comrade in the party,"[49] For two years Yuri continued to indulge in the warmth and understanding of this world which so sharply contrasted with his past loneliness. He had not freed himself from romantic dreaming, but now at least his inner world found strength through his association in the study circles. To the end he was to insist that the revolutionary party must not exclude those who wished to further its purpose.

His years at the gymnasium were not without some anxious moments. Shortly before Yuri was to graduate, an organized demonstration was planned by some university students and workers for the funeral of Shelgunov, a writer. Yuri and a few of his comrades, against the stern admonitions of the older students that the youngsters would certainly endanger their right to enter the university if they were seen, excitedly followed the solemn procession. The next day he learned that some of the demonstrators had been arrested and imprisoned. After hearing of this "harsh justice", he learned further that photographs had been taken and that the inspector from his school had been summoned by the police to identify his "foster-children". At once Yuri despaired of his future in

[49] Ibid., p. 46.

St. Petersburg and secretly began making plans to go abroad to study. The approaching exam which would, if he were successful, mark the end of his life in gymnasia and the beginning of university life was forgotten, for he and his comrades were certain that they would be denied access to the exam by the authorities. But at the last moment, he learned that through the efforts of one of his comrade's parents the authorities had decided not to take action: "With an unexpected flood of energy, I prepared with abandon for the exams; in a short time I had thrown my brain into order."[50] Yuri passed the examinations with apparent ease and received, as he said, "...a certificate of maturity and a noticeable feeling of changing to the "adult class" of society."[51]

By the adult class Yuri did not particularly mean that he was now ready to take his place in society, at least not official society. For him the real, honorable world was in the comradeship of study circles and student demonstrations. Maturity, as exemplified in the certificate of graduation, meant more than anything else the opportunity to further his romantic revolutionary schemes. The object which first demanded his attention was the Imperial Public Library of St.

[50] Ibid., p. 59.

[51] Ibid., p. 60.

Petersburg, which had prohibited all gymnasium students from its store of knowledge. Reading everything in which there appeared a reference to socialism or the revolutionary movement, Yuri concentrated especially on the old journals of the 1870's, studying in detail the political events and, in particular, trying to divine from these events the "inner meaning" of the political process. So intense was his study that he never forgot all the aspects of the judicial process, including the names of all the accusations and judgments that could be rendered.[52]

Apparently all this reading failed to enlighten him as to the inner meaning of politics, for in the fall of 1891, when he entered the University, Yuri chose to matriculate in the natural sciences. True to his partially realized identity, he rejected jurisprudence and economics out of lack of personal interest and because he felt then that "...the juridical faculty was entered with the conscious intent of a future career as an official, and thus we...entered natural science, which we reckoned to be the most democratic."[53] At least for the time being, Yuri and his comrades would have nothing to do with studies associated with official society.

[52] Ibid., p. 61.

[53] Ibid.

Yuri's choice was reinforced at the University by the general wave of "scientific socialism" which flooded the study circles of the young intelligentsia.[54] His first impressions of the University were of lectures on anatomy, the most popular course of the day. Those who arrived late to the auditorium found only standing space for the duration of the two-hour lectures given by a P. F. Lesgaft. Yuri recalls the dynamism of the "new" ideas presented there: "He at once infected us with a thirst for learning the exact science....I left with a firmness...of purpose to begin in a most serious way 'to slice frogs'...."[55] With the same enthusiasm which marked his spurt of reading at the Imperial Public Library, Yuri entered the laboratory to observe and perform experiments.

Although young Tsederbaum's mind bathed in the new studies, his heart soon began to wander from the microscope and the structure of tissues to much broader questions of social relations. He notes in retrospect that upon his entering the University, a certain uneasiness troubled him, for his ardor for scientific pursuits was often diverted by a desire for the sociability of protesting against the injustice of the regime and a hostile community: "The romantic vision that I

[54] Haimson, op. cit., p. 67.

[55] Zapiski sotsial demokrata, p. 63.

should follow the path of dangerous exploits was not strange to me--I was hardly 18 years old."[56] Yuri found, too, that many of the lecturers were dry and repetitious, reading word for word from lithographed lecture notes and repeating the same uninteresting stories. Other professors were as often discussing public questions as they were teaching science. Soon Yuri's interest in science began to wane and his passion for problems of a social nature gained the upper hand.

From his first days in the enormous halls of the University, Yuri began to renew old acquaintances and to meet other youths who like him viewed the august halls of learning as "a temple of public service." Aside from the few familiar and reassuring faces of his former comrades, he was introduced to second- and third-year students who were already well-acquainted with academic life. In many instances he came to know the younger brothers of older students of some reputation in revolutionary circles; several of Yuri's new comrades had themselves marched in the Shelgunov demonstration. One of his closest friends was Ivan Dominikovich Stavski, who was raised in a Christian family and was foster-son to a wealthy, ultra-reactionary pomeshchik. Looking back, Martov attributed this mutual trust and admiration to their common uncertainty about their place in the world; "From the very first conversation, I perceived in Stavski a mind kindred to mine, rent by some determined

[56] Ibid., p. 62.

struggle with life."[57] With Stavski and a few other friends, young Tsederbaum organized a study circle the purpose of which was to work out the precise direction of their common aims in serving the people.

From a distance, Yuri was introduced to many other characters of the revolutionary drama. Kizenkampf, one of his more worldly associates, pointed out to him at a lecture a certain Statkovski, "an evil-minded and dangerous provocateur", who carried with him at all times a volume of Marx's Capital in order to ensnare the unwary students. Apparently Statkovski's disguise was not extremely effective: Martov recalls that the career of this provocateur ended abruptly when students literally hooted him out of the auditorium whenever he appeared there.[58] Older students, to whom the small group looked for guidance, strengthened the youth's hatred for these most dangerous of Tsarist agents with stories of their spying and intrigues among the University student circles. In these older, experienced revolutionaries, Yuri found the identity which he was to adopt for the rest of his life. N. D. Sokolov, a Narodolstvii, worked with Yuri's circle in matters of aims and organization; the impression of this "model" revolutionary

[57] Ibid., p. 66.

[58] Ibid., p. 69.

on the youths was profound: "Whenever we saw him with his exact, carefully-trimmed beard, passing through the corridors of the University preoccupied with some secret affairs, we did not doubt that before us was one of the revolutionary leaders, who would at sometime introduce us to the holy of holies."[59]

With all the seriousness of their intent to develop themselves into responsible revolutionaries, Yuri and his comrades found at least one occasion on which to play a little "trick". The victim of their trick was a German science student who had become acquainted with the members of the circle. They all welcomed his interest in their group until at one of their meetings Smit (the new member) unrolled a detailed plan for a new revolutionary party which, as they saw it, was founded on "good intentions". Smit had outlined a harmonious, scientifically planned society of revolutionaries, including "literary-musical evenings" for all to enjoy. Having agreed later that this German mind was on an entirely different plane from their own, the members selected Yuri to draw up a pompous ultimatum, describing the group's purpose in very definite terms as revolutionary and involving great personal risks and moral obligations, and that entering into this circle with the intent of comradeship alone was not an acceptable motive. One of

[59] Ibid., p. 70.

the members presented these conditions for membership in their group to the astonished Smit. As anticipated by Yuri and his comrades, Smit declined to agree to such conditions; later, he thanked them for warning him about the true nature of the circle.[60]

The news of their trick spread rapidly to the circles of the older students, who assumed that because Yuri had written the ultimatum for Smit that he was the leader of their circle (this made Yuri uncomfortable because he was the youngest and least experienced of the group). It was not long before Yuri and his comrades were paid an unexpected visit by N. D. Sokolov and two of his bearded comrades. (They learned later that one of these impressive young men was P. B. Struve, who was even then well-known among revolutionaries.) The purpose of this auspicious visit was to add signatures to a petition of protest against certain "indecent, reactionary departures" of the popular writer, Vladimir Solov'yev. Solov'yev had recently published an article condemning Russian society, the terrible sins of which had brought retribution in the form of starvation for two-thirds of Russia. Unfortunately for the noble feelings of the protestors, the author of this blasphemous article explained after receiving the indignant petition that the sins of Russia were not, as the students thought, the terrorism that led to the assassination of the Tsar, but rather they were the Jewish pogroms of 1881-82![61] The trick this time

[60] Ibid., pp. 72-76.
[61] Ibid., p. 78.

was on themselves, created by their own desire to make themselves heard in the world and by their common interest in protesting against that accursed world.

The little circle was gradually drawn closer to the activities--mostly readings and discussions of illegal books and pamphlets--of the older students. Increased participation in these groups led finally to Yuri's arrest, expulsion from the University and imprisonment for a few months. The joy of having at last become officially recognized as a revolutionary was over-shadowed by the circumstance of his arrest. With great dismay he learned that Rizenkampf, a comrade of his own circle, had supplied the police-interrogators with detailed information about the activities of his group. Practically overnight, Yuri was forced to accept the need for a disciplining of a revolutionary's feelings in order to protect the other comrades.[62] His arrest and subsequent curbing of his romantic dreaming marked the beginning of the end of his struggle with life, of his inner yearning for a conscious, whole identity.

The final step was to fit his personal image into a world-view which would accommodate in more or less integrated whole the various schemes, heroes, interests, and experiences of his not very distant past. What attitudes and ideas were available from his early years and relevant to his present situation? How was he to relate these all to the future? Yuri's first

[63]Haimson, op. cit., p. 68.

nineteen years contained many contradictory experiences: his relatively sheltered, comfortable home had been shaken by the pogroms in Odessa; later, at the gymnasium, Russian society confirmed its hostility for the Jew. The apparent security of his family was further threatened when, in returning to St. Petersburg in 1889, the family's right of residence was questioned by the police. Yuri learned from experience that the life of a Jew in Russia, whether privileged or not, was not a matter of right, but an obligation to be as humble as possible. Although the language of the Tsedorbaum family was French, at least between the parents and children, and Martov mentions no training in the Jewish religion or traditions, he was never allowed to forget that he had been born a Jew. Even within the comradeship of the revolutionary party this distinction was recognized, e.g., Lenin's note at the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (1903) which pointed out that one-third of the delegates were Jews.[63] (It is perhaps too much to say that Lenin was justified because the three primary figures who opposed him at that Congress were Jews[64] and that this opposition shows a conscious or unconscious recognition of their "Jewish bonds", but the fact that these three men arrived at the same conclusions as to the general

[63] Ibid., p. 60.

[64] i.e., Trotsky, Akselrod, and Martov

nature of the revolutionary movement at that time can not be passed as merely coincidental.) Perhaps, too, the emotional insecurity of his "Jewishness" was heightened by the continual absences, often for years, of his father.

In alliance with this insecurity was Yuri's equally vital concern for a direction to his aspirations and intellectual development. Ambiguity was inherent in his parents' compromise with Russian society. Of the alternatives apparently available to him, there was in fact only one which could accommodate the various memories and strivings of his soul. In his "struggle with life" he could find no support from Judaism toward which his parents were at best luke-warm, nor was a compromise of his inner world of ideals with the Tsarist world possible. Included in this latter choice was the path his parents had chosen, but revocable privileges could satisfy neither his ideals nor his hatred for the regime which claimed to own his right to self-development.

The word "self-development" recurs throughout the early years of his memoirs and is perhaps one of the keys to understanding the later Martov. In describing the first study circles the most persistent adjective is self-development, and in his admiration for his grandfather the same idea is voiced: "...he was self-taught—in his youth, fleeing from the oppressive ghetto and that inhumanity, he energetically created for himself a conspicuous position."[65] This same idea which seemed so important to young Tsederbaum appeared in a general form in his

[65] Zapiski sotsial demokrata, p. 9.

early attempts to define the relationship between the party and the masses. Martov agreed with Lenin that the intelligentsia must play a prominent role in leading the workers to greater "consciousness", but he insisted that this consciousness would develop spontaneously as the workers, thr ugh clashes with their employers and authority, came gradually to recognize their role in history. Later, he was to tend more toward emphasizing the role of the party in disciplining the workers, but the process of the education of the worker appeared always to retain this element of self-development:

> "We took the average worker as he was at that time, limited to a local and shop view, failing to bridge the gap separating this view from the social life of other classes.
>
> But we were convinced that once they were drawn into a social struggle on the basis of these day-to-day economic interests, the masses would be prepared by the very process of this struggle to assimilate wider social and political strivings and thus put into contact with other classes, brought to self-definition in relation".[66]

The complex of ideas emphasizing the deterministic, spontaneous unfolding of history seems closely related to Martov's idea of self-development, i.e., an unfolding from within resulting from a "determined struggle with life", and it is possible that this earlier concept prepared the ground for his later acceptance and defense of Marxism's deterministic aspect.

From this general study of Martov's youthful years several factors relevant to the consideration of the Jews' role in

[66] Quoted in Haimson, p. 72, from Zapiski, p. 225.

Marxism emerge. One of the most important influences of Martov's choices throughout these years was his parents' position in society as a family of enlightened Jews.[67] Like Marx, Trotsky, and Akselrod, Martov was left to his inclinations and experiences to develop a personal world-view and identity.*

Undoubtedly the most persistent and dominating social influence was the ever-present pressure of anti-semitic feeling built into Russian society. The clash of an ignorant, superstitious, and vengeful society with an individual product of Western enlightenment was a basic ingredient of young Tsederbaum's struggle for maturity. He had seen prejudice in its most savage violence and had felt humiliation both in his personal life and through his family's insecurity. The unfortunate position of the enlightened Jew who had advanced far beyond the society in which he lived was in Russia, so much more than in Western Europe, made more prominent by the stark contrast between the Autocracy and ninety percent of Russian society on the other.

A complete analysis of the formation of a revolutionary

[67] Cf. p. 15 above.

* In strictly psychological terms "identity" would encompass "world-view". I have chosen to separate these terms in order to emphasize the two-fold historical development of Martov's personality; first, the identification with "rebels" and revolutionaries, second, his working out of a conscious, world-view founded in Marxism.

is not possible here. Obviously, highly relevant information concerning Martov's somatic and psychological make-up are absent. (This is not to mention the necessity of the amateur to tread cautiously in such complex matters.) As to what extent the disability of Martov's once-injured leg affected his intellectual and emotional development only plausible estimates of "over-compensation" and withdrawal from normal relations are possible.[68]

Up to this point little has been said of Martov's direct relation to the Marxian world-view. It would appear that his conversion was fortuitous, i.e., precisely at the critical time in the formation of his intellectual orientation to the world, Marxism was making substantial inroads on the revolutionary circles in Russia.[69] Many of the revolutionary groups still upheld the views of Narodism, but the writing of Akselrod and Plekhanov (who had been converted to Marxism ten years before) was rapidly collecting a fervent following among young intellectuals. Connected with this fresh and comprehensive view was the strong current of scientific studies then permeating the University. Thus, Marx's claim to be a scientific analysis of the objective conditions of society was destined to have a profound effect on those students, like Martov, who had become

[68] Cf. Haimson, p. 62.

[69] Haimson, p. 69.

convinced of the worthiness of Science and its quality of promising basic or ultimate answers.

Yet even at this point Martov's choices for the future were not limited to one. His past experience with antisemitism had left a deep and unhealed mark on his sensitive mind. His Jewishness, an incurable weakness in his defenses, had driven him into rebellion. Young Martov was fully committed to a life of revolt, illegal books, and comradeship in the revolutionary study circles. Within the University, study groups were often split between adherents of the older populist and terrorist movements and the Marxists, but until his twentieth year Yuri had apparently made no choice. His heroes among the older students were drawn indiscriminately from both sides: his romantic hero-worship still found a large place in his world.

Until his final expulsion from the University in the spring of 1893, Martov had participated in these study groups only as a member of an intellectual discussion circle with few real contacts with "the people" whom he planned to serve. Allowed by the authorities to return to the University in 1892, he at once began his rounds of clandestine speeches and readings of illegal pamphlets. It was during these last months as a student that Martov decided for Marxism.

The choice was made out of a combination of factors, most of which appear fortuitous. For at this time there were renewed

reports of peasant violence against those generous youths who had in the name of humane public service gone to the people to help them. Yuri undoubtedly recalled the unpleasantness of his earlier experiences with the ignorant and savage peasant; his enthusiasm for "the people" was dampened by a closer look at reality. In his first years at the University, he had passed over scientific socialism for the glory of heroism among the people, but now the answers to his search for a world-view did not seem so simple. At the same time when it seemed that the people were no longer reliable, new volumes of Marxist pamphlets from the pens of Plekhanov and Akselrod were circulating in the study circles. The reasons for Martov's accepting Marxism are not entirely clear even to Martov: "I no longer remember whether it was on the basis of readings or of comradely conversations, but my attitude toward spontaneity strongly changed at this time. Very little was left of my naive spirit of revolt."[70] The probable cause of his change of attitude was the coming together of his dissolutionment with the people, of the renewed enthusiasm of his comrades for scientific socialism, of his experience at the University when one of his comrades broke down and informed the police of his group's activities, and of a maturational process integrating all these.

[70]Quoted in Haimson, p. 69n., (Zapiski, p. 137).

Implicit in this discussion is the answer to those who would like to connect the Jews with Marxism because it can be shown that at many points Judaism and Marxism provide similar explanations of man's place in the world. The assumption underlying this hypothesis is that the Jewish leaders of Marxist movements had been imbued with Judaism before their "conversion". Complete information as to the religious atmosphere of the home is certainly lacking in nearly all cases, but it would be well to consider that many times, for example, in the case of Trotsky, the parents or even grandparents of the Jewish revolutionary had separated their families from any contact with Jewish communities and tended to ignore their inherited religion. If these families were Jewish by social definition only, then there is little reason to attempt demonstrations as to the basic compatibility of Judaism and Marxism, and one would do better to concentrate on the fact that the Jewish revolutionaries in their youth were guided more by the intellectual environment either of their enlightened parents or of their Russian schools. In comparing the Congresses of Russian Social Democracy with the shules of Jewish orthodoxy[71], one must remember that many Jewish revolutionaries had never seen the communities of orthodox Jews.

Still, there is enough evidence available which indicates that within the homes of these enlightened Jews various degrees

[71] Cf. Haimson, pp. 61-62.

of orthodoxy remained in spite of the families' acceptance of enlightenment. Often the compromise with society was made with little or no effort to effectively reorientate the thinking of the entire household. Although the father, perhaps of necessity, became converted, or adopted liberal views, the mother, forever the emotional center of the Jewish family, maintained a Jewish home for the children to grow up in.[72] Perhaps it made little difference to society whether or not the enlightened Jew also transformed the spirit of his home as long as the pretense of conversion remained. In individual cases one gets glimpses of attitudes and ideas which governed the home life of future revolutionaries, from which it is possible to assume that there was some early training or at least contact with the principles and practice of Judaism.

The Jews' attitude toward intellectual pursuits, especially in their relation to a future of teaching, i.e., as a Rabbi, has been noted. In fact, Edmund Wilson's characterization of Karl Marx as the secular Rabbi[73] is not as unfounded as might first appear: Erik Erikson has described the dilemma of a four-year-old Jewish boy who suffered intensely from the expectations which he inherited from his Jewish past. The boy's crisis stemmed from his early training which prepared him for a life of questioning

[72] Arendt, op. cit., p. 65.

[73] Edmund Wilson, To The Finland Station, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1940, p. 117.

and skillful argumentation. A change in the family's environment which rendered these skills relatively meaningless brought upon the child a sense of incomprehensible frustration and contributed greatly to his mental disorders.[74] Thus, the argument that Heinrich Marx's conversion, aside from the dubious enlightening effect on the family as a whole, effectively removed Karl Marx from Judaism because he was only six years old at the time of his father's conversion does not stand up to the present state of psychological knowledge. The historian is undoubtedly on uncertain grounds as to the content of the early values and attitudes Marx received, yet there is considerable reason to believe that Marx, as well as subsequent Jewish revolutionaries, was equipped quite early with some values, peculiarly Jewish, which related means and ends for his future development.[75]

In the case of Martov, his mother's stern refusal to placate the savages of the pogrom by putting crosses in the windows[76] shows that at least she was not willing to compromise her religion, even for the safety of her family. It is also evident that the Tsederbaums had not abandoned Judaism altogether, but only that strict orthodoxy connected with life in the ghetto. A. O. Tsederbaum's chosen career was to establish contact, through the publication of popular journals, between enlightened Jewish

[74] Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society, 1950, pp. 26-27.

[75] Cf. R.N. Carew Hunt, The Theory and Practice of Communism, Macmillan Company, 1961, p. 9, on Marx's Rabbinical heritage.

[76] Zapiski sotsial demokrata, op. cit., p. 11.

intellectuals and the oppressed Jewish masses, and there is no reason to believe that with this pride of his own people, the Jews, he would discard the cherished principles of Judaism. In working closely with the older Tsederbaum, Yuri's father was evidently of the same mind.

It is not surprising that Martov offers little to enlighten us about his Jewish training. The very act of accepting the revolutionary identity meant that he had chosen to repudiate his past. The stigma of Jewishness called up in his memory only thoughts of past unpleasantness and insecurity. What remained of his early years it is possible only to infer from the little knowledge available on his home life and from the course of his later opinions and actions. Trotsky, who seems even more concerned about rejecting his own Jewish background, gives a revealing evaluation of Martov as he knew him at the turn of the century:

> The leader of the Mensheviks, Martov, must be counted as one of the most tragic figures of the revolutionary movement. A gifted writer, an ingenious politician, a penetrating thinker, Martov stood far above the intellectual movement of which he became leader. But his thought lacked courage; his insight was devoid of will. Sheer doggedness was no substitute. Martov's initial reaction to events always showed a revolutionary trend of thought. Immediately, however, his thought, which lacked the support of a will, died down.[77]

Martov had indeed developed to a fine point his argumentative skills and his ability to interpret the Law, but he was not,

[77] Leon Trotsky, My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, p. 164.

in obvious contrast to Lenin, a skillful tactician of politics. Bertram Wolfe points out how this contrasting of personalities complemented each other, at least until the Second Congress.[78] Certainly not all, but at least a part ofthis difference probably stemmed from Martov's Jewish background. In comparing and contrasting Lenin and Martov, Leonard Schapiro notes that whereas Lenin gave all to the single end of revolution, Martov kept his "certain innate moral canon".[79] Is this, then, the source of Martov's lack of "will" which Trotsky had noticed? Martov was always bound by some inner brakes when it came to implementing the ideas of his fertile imagination: the revolution and revenge were not the only ends for which he worked. It appears, too, as though socialibility (Martov's often-used word) had become an end in itself. As a Jew, Martov could not be accepted fully as an individual human being except in the brotherhood of the revolutionary circles. Perhaps unconsciously Martov had relegated the Revolution to the indefinite future so that the function of these study circles would not disappear and with them the one social group where personal respect was a reality. Martov's "lack of will" probaly stemmed from several factors of which he was perhaps only vaguely aware: 1) his inclination, derived in part from personal experience, to

[78] Wolfe, op. cit., p. 251.

[79] Leonard Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Random House, 1959 p. 307.

emphasize the deterministic, spontaneous element of Marxism, 2) his complete acceptance of and reception into the social bonds of the revolutionary fraternity, and 3) "certain innate moral canon" derived from his childhood as a Jew.

The rather extended examination of Martov's early years in this chapter provides some insight into the making of a Jewish revolutionary. In some ways the experience of this Russian Jew was similar to that of Karl Marx a generation or more earlier. Undoubtedly these same conditions were very influential in leading many other Jews into the revolutionary movements. In the scope of this paper it is not possible to consider all possible social variables, especially since there was such a wide discrepancy in the attitudes and social structures between the Eastern and Western European states. A more tenable approach is to consider Martov's experience in terms of the lives of other Russian Jews who became Marxists. In this way, some generalizations can be made without unduly complicating the view.

III

The primary characters in the ranks of Russian Social Democracy were Lenin, Plekhanov, Akselrod, Potresov, Trotsky, and Martov. Others could undoubtedly be added, but of these outstanding spokesmen for Marxism, three-Akselrod, Trotsky, Martov--were of Jewish origin. Two other Marxists who were intimately connected with or vitally interested in the Russian movement were Rosa Luxemburg and A. Helphand (Parvus). Both were Jews. The early years of Parvus are as obscure as his reasons for being in the revolutionary movement.* The formative years of Luxemburg are better known and are relevant here because her family situation was quite similar to that of her Russian neighbors.

Martov was scarcely twenty years old when Potresov returned to Russia with interpretations of Marxism written by the Russian émigrés in the West. From Switzerland came the writings of Akselrod and Plekhanov, the pioneers and revered names of Marxist theory. These two leading theorists of Marxism were of an earlier generation than Martov, Lenin, or Trotsky. Plekhanov, the son of a gentleman farmer, had prepared for a military career. At seventeen, he had felt an urgent need to repay a

*Trotsky, who was for a short while very close to Parvus, was naturally puzzled by his friend's devotion to both the revolution and to the accumulation of great wealth. (Cf., Trotsky, My Life, p. 67.)

"debt to the people"; his heightened sense of guilt led him directly to speeches and writings to advance the revolutionary cause.[80] Whatever the reason for this conversion, Plekhanov had by 1892 become the undisputed "father of Russian Marxism" and was its guiding light *in absentia*.

Paul Akselrod, born in 1850, first met Plekhanov in 1875. At that time, Plekhanov was yet a sympathizer with the revolutionary cause but had not yet become the object of police hunts; Akselrod was in St. Petersburg on a revolutionary mission from Geneva and had been directed to Plekhanov by some of his exiled comrades. In 1880, Akselrod was again sent to Plekhanov in St. Petersburg, this time because it was Plekhanov who was being closely pursued by the police. The two men, despite their diverse backgrounds and outlooks on life, worked together in the cause of socialism for twenty-four years, until the great schism in the Social Democratic Party tore them apart.[81]

Of direct concern to the problem of the Jews' role in Marxism is Akselrod's social background and childhood. Unlike nearly all other well-known revolutionaries, Paul Akselrod had grown up in a family of the poorest of the poor. His father, a tavern keeper, had abandoned the orthodox Jewish community in order to live alone in his poverty. Like Martov, Akselrod be-

[80] Haimson, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

came isolated and had to rely upon his own imagination for his interpretation of the world; not until he entered school was there any companionship for the young boy. To make his isolation complete, young Akselrod had no brothers or sisters. The attitude of his parents toward the Tsarist officials is reminiscent of Marx's predicament: "[There were] memories of fear and anger when his parents scraped and bowed before the passing *pans* or trembled at the sight of officialdom...."[82]

Recollections of a childhood six decades in the past must be necessarily dim. From Akselrod's impressions of his youth it is difficult to assess the relation of his family to society. Although his father left the Jewish communities, it is not at all clear how much or how little of the Jewish religion and traditions he retained for the family. Contacts with the Jewish community were evidently maintained, for it was through the beneficence of that community, at least its more enlightened members, that Paul was able to manage both his earlier schooling and his stay at the *gymnasium*.[83] It was not until his first several years at the *gymnasium* that he tasted the apple of enlightenment. From these few bits of information, it is perhaps safe to assume that the influence of Judaism in Akselrod's youth was substantial.

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[83] *Ibid.*

At least for the first twelve years of his life, there is no evidence that he knew the spirit of enlightenment. Once he had entered the gymnasium, Akselrod was caught up in the spirit of the Russian radical tradition through the works of Belinski and Turgenev; enlightenment became his guiding star, the answer to the ills of the world. Was it only his exceptional intelligence and sensitivity which led him to this temple of reason, or was there something in his ancestry which prepared him for this apparent conversion? Akselrod evaluated his childhood in very suggestive terms: "On the basis of the impressions of the first years of my life in the countryside, I was partially prepared to worship everything spiritual and to scorn everything material and superficial."[84]

The physical reality of his youth was intolerable; but ideas could be comforting and a source of hope. More than a mere reaction to an environment, this worship of things spiritual was very likely a tradition inherited from the Jewish influence in his early years. As Haimson points out, "...Jewish community life was characterized by the superiority of the spiritual over the temporal...."[85] Akselrod remained an outstanding writer and theorist for Marxian dogmas, but he never developed the political skills necessary to lead the people.

[84]Quoted in Haimson 37n., (Perezhitoe i peredumannoe, p. 39.)

[85]Haimson, op. cit., p. 61.

To this point, the similarities between the early years of Akselrod and Martov are strong: a partially estranged family, probably infused with a moderate dosage of Judaism; an intelligent young boy, repelled by or at least not at all attracted to the crude or hostile world; a tendency to live in an inner world, possibly the result of his revulsion from the environment or of his early training in the values of the mental agility. Each of these factors undoubtedly contributed to the boys' acceptance of rational, humanitarian and radical thought, though it would be impossible to single out one as more important than the others.

By the age of eighteen Akselrod had decided to adopt the garb of the revolutionary. His desire to enlighten the people, acquired while he was at the gymnasium, fused with his enthusiasm for the fiery oratory of Lassalle. More than fifty years after the event Akselrod recalled that "the proud language and authoritative tone of the statements of a 'subject', a Jew at that, to the ruling power (for so I considered the procurator and the judge) made upon me an immeasurable impression and gave me a profound delight and satisfaction...I decided to direct my strength toward the emancipation of all the poor and oppressed of Russia."[36] Akselrod, unlike Martov, had risen from the people. But he shared the conviction that his experience of emancipation from the wretched Russian environment could also be accomplished by

[36] Quoted in Haimson, p. 28, (Perezhitoe i peredumannoe, p. 73-74).

the people. For Akselrod, the key concept was samodeyatelnost, a free and independent display of initiative. More than anything, enlightenment meant for Akselrod the opportunity to be free of dependence and servility. Like Martov, Akselrod believed that the people, through education and self-improvement, could shake off their century-old habits of passivity and indifference to public life. Each of these Mensheviks held fast to his conviction that the revolutionary force of history was within the people, waiting only for the moment when spontaneity developed into consciousness.

Akselrod embraced Populism wholeheartedly until the end of the 1870's saw the rise of the "Narodnaya Volya" organization. The Narodovoltsi repudiated the potential of the masses and proposed to proceed directly to destroy the center of the Russian state, a proposal which Akselrod could never accept. Akselrod's rejection of the "Narodnaya Volya" program was pronounced quickly compared to his process of conversion to Social Democracy. The first indications of a changing orientation were seen in his collaboration with Plekhanov in editing their new organ, "Chernyi Peredel". Here scientific socialism and popular strivings were carefully mixed, the former being the contribution of Plekhanov. During this same period (1879-80), the working class began to show its determination to oppose the present order. The double pressures of his comrade's views and immediate experience compelled Akselrod to turn more toward Social Democracy

and Marxism.

Akselrod's faith in the people caused no problems of identification, for he himself had risen from the poor and oppressed. His was a secure confidence rather than a learned faith. It was a confidence of a self-made man, supported by the optimism of Western democracy. Marxism confirmed in theory what Akselrod felt confidently, that the people, and specifically the proletariat, by its experience would rise to conscious opposition to the existing order. Time and time again he would return to the people to test his unshakeable faith and to help speed the inevitable workings of history.

If Martov became a revolutionary to escape his past, for Akselrod the tasks of enlightening and guiding the people were supreme confirmation of his bonds with the oppressed. The refrain that the poor shall inherit the earth is one of the strongest in the traditions of Judaism. The duty to aid brothers in distress found ample opportunities for application throughout the centuries. Sympathy for the downtrodden is certainly not a Jewish peculiarity, but neither is it a Russian strength. The filial duty to be thy brother's keeper was no idle slogan, for it was a fundamental law of the Jewish state and the Mosaic Law.[87] When Akselrod discovered for himself the emancipating effects of learning in the Western way, his greatest concern became to share his "wealth" with those who needed it most.

[87] A. Gray, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 35.

Akselrod was among the first Populists who turned to Marxism for a theoretical foundation for their views. He was already in middle-age when he met the young man who was to lead, with Lenin, the overthrow of Tsarism. L. Trotsky, in his social background, had scarcely a point in common with Akselrod. Except for an apparently superior intellect, the only obvious link between the men was the fact that they were both of Jewish parentage. Trotsky, of a different generation and economic group, ought to be able to tell much about the Jews in Marxism.

The life of Leon Trotsky has been told in an autobiography (available in many languages) and in several biographical studies, but it is necessary here to review briefly his early years in an attempt to illuminate the process of his conversion from respectability to revolutionary activity. Trotsky characterized his childhood as neither very dark, like the majority, or very carefree, like a very small minority, but only as the grayish atmosphere of a lower-middle class family in an obscure village. For the first nine years of his life, he was in close contact with the "natural coarseness" of human relationships but never seems to have been among them. Trotsky recalls that "...nature and individuals occupied a lesser place than books and ideas. For a long time people passed through my mind like random shadows. I looked into myself and into books, in which in turn I tried again to find myself and my future."[88]

[88]Trotsky, op. cit., p. 59.

The few permanent impressions of this country life were negative. The coarse language of the servants and workers, often grumbling about the master, the harsh treatment of the servile peasants, the decadent landowners of once prosperous estates--all these helped to draw him, when the opportunity offered, toward the relatively refined and civilized urban culture. Through experiences in school with teachers prejudiced against certain national groups, young Trotsky reinforced his earlier impressions of injustice built into Russian society; but he, as a Jew, felt little of this Russifying attitude for from the beginning he was the top student in his classes.

Throughout the account of his youth, Trotsky reveals very little which would indicate that his Jewish background drew him toward or pushed him into a life of rebellion. The religious atmosphere of his home was respectful but cool toward the ancestral faith, and it became obviously more a-religious as the children grew older and the family's prosperity increased. The Schpentzers, with whom he lived while attending school in Odessa, did not even put up a pretense of religiosity. On the other hand, the Bronstein's were in no way Russified. In their rural environment were many other Jewish families, a synagogue, and Jews of the professions. It was, in short, a Jewish community transplanted from the Pale. The Bronsteins were most cdrtainly Jewish, if only in a manner suited to the wider and freer character of the steppes. Trotsky recalls that during his school years, although

he held no political views, he had "an intense hatred of the existing order".[89] This spirit of opposition, he says, came from his experiences with the entire social environment of the time, but nothing peculiarly Jewish seems to have formed this feeling.

In opposition to this present order, young Bronstein began to formulate in his imagination an idealized picture of the Western world, where he visualized, ..."a culture which was high in itself and included everybody without exception."[90] It was the influence of the city, and especially of the humane spirit of the Schpentzer family, that helped him transcend his distasteful environment and to begin building a new world, if only in his imagination. Like the Schpentzers, the Tsederbaums, and the young Akselrod, Lev Bronstein began to advance beyond the snail-paced culture around him. The ideals and ideas from the West convinced him that a better world could and should be made: "Vaguely I believed (at fifteen years) in a gradual development which would bring backward Russia nearer to advanced Europe."[91]

His childhood fancies, indignation, and sympathy converged in his seventeenth year. It was a year of self-assertion,

[89] Ibid., p. 90.

[90] Ibid., p. 91.

[91] Ibid., p. 95.

breaking away from parental authority, and searching for a system for his feelings and ideas. He at first rejected Marxism because it seemed a completed system; but during the next few years the ideas of Marx seemed more and more to coincide with Trotsky's own conclusions about the meaning of life. "I did not absorb historical materialism at once, dogmatically. The dialectic method revealed itself to me for the first time not as abstract definitions but as a living spring which I had found in the historical process as I tried to understand it."[92]

From Trotsky's account of the years immediately preceding his acceptance of Marxism, it appears that the greatest influence on his decision came from his reading of Mill, Bentham, Darwin, Labriola, and many newspapers and periodicals from the West. Particularly important was Labriola's critique of the multiplicity-of-factors theory of historical causation, for the monistic interpretation seemed to Trotsky to answer many questions which the multiple-factor theory could not.[93] Marxism supplied a logical and total explanation of the past, present, and future, and at the same time, it provided a firm basis for Trotsky's spirit of rebellion.

There was apparently no special influence of Jewishness or

[92] Ibid., p. 122.

[93] Ibid., p. 119.

Judaism in Trotsky's conversion first to revolution, then to Marxism. Bertram Wolfe concludes that whatever the causes for his becoming a revolutionary, "...they were in the main the same forces that drove his entire generation of student youth in the same direction."[94] The case is complicated by the fact that Trotsky, unlike the two other Marxists discussed before, chose finally to join Lenin in the Bolshevik wing of Social Democracy. Was this due to a difference in personality? Trotsky certainly had ample reason to believe in his own capacities, for he had long been at the head of the class. In chiding Martov for his lack of will, was Trotsky affirming his self-confidence and conviction that will must play an important role in history? It is probable that his father, who did not believe in God, and his mother, who observed rather than felt the religion of her ancestors, did little to inspire in their son a sense of duty or to instil in him "innate moral canon". Trotsky recalls how, at an early age, he was not able to tell a lie, but later as a revolutionary he affirmed the necessity for lying if the cause demanded it.[95] He seems to have overcome the apparently weak scruples of his childhood.

Wolfe attributes the differences between Jewish Mensheviks and Jewish Bolsheviks to the fact that the Jewish colleagues of

[94]Wolfe, op. cit., p. 132.

[95]Ibid., p. 57.

Lenin were "non-professing, Russified, brought up outside the Pale."[96] It is true that Jewish teaching and practice were weak in the Bronstein home, and that David Bronstein in fact closely resembled the stereotype of the "kulak". It is clear that the rustic, crude life of acquisition was at least as unsatisfactory to young Bronstein as was the entire social atmosphere of the times.

[96] Ibid., p. 183.

IV

A Conclusion to a thesis which claims to be no more than a beginning toward understanding a larger problem seems abortive, but it is necessary at least to draw together the results of this study and to suggest lines for further investigation. Before proceeding to the task of evaluating the evidence and drawing generalizations, several facts should be noted concerning the nature of that evidence.

Some of the limitations of this study have been clearly revealed in the preceding chapters. The approach to the problem of the Jews in Marxist movements involves the disciplines of psychology, sociology and history in combinations varying with the particular aspect of the topic at hand. Obviously, in unskilled hands the interdisciplinary approach carries with it serious difficulties and deficiencies. The attempt has been made here to relate these various approaches because an adequate understanding of historical phenomena, i.e., events of the past involving human action and interaction, demands such an approach.

For the psychological processes involved in this problem, the author has relied heavily on the work of Erik Erikson, especially his book Childhood and Society. A great deal of encouragement and some consolation was found in his dictum that "the psychoanalytical method is essentially a historical method". A rigorous application of the psychoanalytical method was neither

possible nor intended in this paper, although the author has attempted to follow faithfully the outline of the method as demonstrated in Erikson's work. Even if successful on this count, there remains the further objection that the methods outlined by Erikson are not entirely acceptable to all members of his profession.

A difficulty at least as serious as the above limitations in terms of both the psychological processes and the needs of intellectual history was the emphasis on the early, developmental years of the subjects considered. Information on these years was taken entirely from the after-thoughts of mature revolutionaries who had adopted a definite way of perceiving experience which undoubtedly influenced their selection and interpretation of facts concerning those years. In addition, there were no letters, diaries, or accounts written by parents or friends which would lighten the task of the biographer. It is no wonder that Martov, as significant as he was in his decade of collaboration with Lenin, has not, to the best of this author's knowledge, found a biographer to tell the story of his life.

Intellectual history, which deals with the origin, development and influence of ideas, has inherent obstacles for the historian. Even if one limits oneself to tracing the course of an idea in history, the qualitative nature of these products

of the human mind (a Marxist might object here) prevents any quantification and measurement necessary to a scientific approach. Although this study has been limited to investigating the influence of a system of ideas and not its historical development, the difficulties are, if anything, more challenging. The formation of a personal world-view involves more than ideas--attitudes and values, very often unexpressed and unrecognized, exert a considerable, if not decisive, influence in the growth of a world-view. It would appear then that the burden of proof falls upon a great many imponderables, raising more questions than answers of the historian.

The problem, for all these doubts, need not be relegated to metaphysics. Lacking approximate measurements, there is still the possibility of controlling certain variables in order to decrease the uncertainty. It is possible, for example, to limit the investigation to the Russian environment and to those Jews for whom a reasonable amount of information is available.

Certain other variables which were important in turning the young Jewish students toward Marxism are only generally measurable. A high level of intelligence combined with a sensitive nature is a combination common among these revolutionaries, but these, as far as this author can determine, are not traits peculiar to or predominate among the Jews. Nor would it be reasonable to subscribe to the views of those "social scientists"

who would attribute pathological tendencies to the Jews because of alleged too close in-breeding in their often compact environments.[97] The discovery of innate, inherited, mental characteristics of a race is beyond the scope of this study.

A certain bias for focusing on the family may be detected in this paper. This is partially the result of the paucity of material available on any other influences in the childhood of the revolutionaries considered herein. Equally important for this bias is the conviction of this author that the family, because it is the primary group in terms of which all personal experiences are measured by the child, is of utmost importance in determining the future of the child. Erikson points out the too-often neglected fact that human society begins with a rather long childhood and youth, each stage of which leaves permanent marks on the adult. Needless to say, the family is dominant throughout this period.

With these several deficiencies in mind, what can be said of the Jews' relation to the Marxist movements? Perhaps the first thing to be said is that a single-factor analysis is entirely inadequate. It is too often assumed that the Jews' entering the revolutionary movements was due to their reaction to antisemitism all around them. Undoubtedly discriminatory laws offended the Jews and forced many into opposition movements.

[97] Dr. J. G. Wilson, "A Study in Jewish Psychopathology", Popular Science, March, 1913, pp. 264-71.

Each of the revolutionaries whose lives were examined in this paper experienced in some form and to varying degrees the humilitation of national or racial prejudice against Jews. On the other hand, the conditions in Russia were not as extreme in terms of antisemitic discrimination as in Galicia where, according to a Dr. R. Gottheil, writing in World's Work (July, 1903), 70% of the 900,000 Jews there were beggars, prohibited by law from all economic life. A similar level of barbarity existed in Rumania, but these countries apparently produced no revolutionary movements, least of all Marxist movements. There is evidence that enlightenment came early to Galicia, but caught between the fanaticism of Jewish orthodoxy and the suffocating legal restrictions, secular, Western learning could not flourish.

Enlightenment took hold in those environments where a certain level of economic security provided leisure for study and contemplation. C. Hayes has pointed out that the Marxists of Western Europe came with few exceptions from middle-class intellectual and professional groups.[98] In Russia, the standard-of-living motivation was important because the masses of the ghetto provided a striking contrast to what could be achieved. In a sense, it was the misery of the ghetto that first alienated families of future Jewish revolutionaries. Whether of compassion

[98] Carlton J. H. Hayes, A Generation of Materialism, Harper and Brothers, 1941, pp. 181-190.

or revulsion, many Jews were compelled to compromise their religion by escaping the ghetto in search of a better life.

At the same time there was an intellectual revulsion to the pedantry, scholasticism and the fanaticism of ghetto orthodoxy. Alexander Tsederbaum, having risen to affluence outside the ghetto, directed a great many attacks against this oppressive, "closed" system of Judaism. It seemed as though Judaism had lost contact with the furture: the living faith of their ancestors that a better life on earth was possible and desirable seemed dead or dying. The ideals of the Enlightenment promised to restore this faith in the future. Nowhere did the idea and the reality conflict more violently than in Russia and the Balkans. Trotsky, commenting on his impressions of Western Marxists, was repulsed by many of these intellectual Marxists because they lacked the revolutionary fervor of the Russians. In some measure, this fervor goes back to the picture of the ghetto streets and the pogroms.

Significantly, the concept of self-development appears in the writings of Martov, Akselrod, and Trotsky, though in different forms. Martov's samorazvivatelnost (self-development) and Akselrod's samodayatelnost (free and independent display of initiative) relate well to Trotsky's belief in the fullest development of his capacities as the path to freedom. Whether this concept was derived from the personal experience of each of these men or from values implanted in early life no one can

say definitely. It is interesting to note that Jewish attitudes toward self-development are positive, but only if this initiative from self-improvement is guided by the wider interests of the community.[99] Even though its source can not be determined, the same concept appears in Marx's theories as a fundamental goal of the process of history. In the final, perfect society each m n will be able to realize his inborn capacities in free, unhindered development. This aspect of Marxism appears early in Karl Marx's life. At seventeen, Marx had written in subdued anger:

> "In choosing a profession, one must be sure that one will not put oneself in the position of acting merely as a servile tool of others; in one's own sphere one must obtain independence, and one must make sure that one has a field to serve humanity."[100]

Marx's fantasy that the worker's consciousness could be raised to the level of international community feeling was shared by those intellectuals who had never felt the pride of belonging to a national group, and who, as a highly intelligent, educated elite, were capable of the breadth of imagination necessary to encompass the entire world. Their tragedy was in believing, like Marx, in a radical humanism which attributed to common man characteristics which have never appeared in fact. The experience of these Marxists was wide, for their minds were

[99] Beryl D. Cohon, Introduction to Judaism, Block Publishing Company, Inc., 1946, pp. 38-47.

[100] Quoted in Wilson, op. cit., p. 111.

open to the secrets of the universe; they suffered to the degree that their interpretations rested on personal experience. Each saw his own achievements of self-improvement, self-definition, and enlightenment and hoped desperately to share that experience with mankind.

Faith in Reason was the binding force for both Jewish and Russian intellectuals: each had shared the experience of seeing their people wallowing in the muck of ignorance, oppressed by authorities which called only upon their sense of obedience and submission. The Jewish masses, smothered in the ghettos by the fears of orthodoxy for its spiritual purity, produced the same impression upon enlightened Jews as the wretchedness of the Russian peasant stamped on the sensitivity of educated Russians. For the first half of the nineteenth century, the Jewish and Russian intelligentsias developed independently, floating side by side in the broad stream of Rationalism and Humanism. The reforms of the sixties certainly encouraged the two to join together in their common ideals, but this brief interlude must not be overestimated. When the interaction of Jews and Russians in the schools was greatly restricted by the "numerus clausus" norms, the elite of the Jewish minds still entered the schools. The Tsars, by allowing only the most gifted of the young Jews into the Russian schools, in effect encouraged their plunging into the revolutionary groups. Most were in some way already

partially estranged from Judaism and official society and the environment of the gymnasium only hastened the process of conversion by further isolating the Jews from their home environments.

It might be expected that those Jews who finally rebelled against their fathers' religion and the established regime had thrown off also the burden of an obsolete and useless world-view. Perhaps this is even what they themselves felt as they dreamed, plotted, and argued about their building a new world of freedom. But the very word freedom, even if it meant only "to be left alone", had long since entered the very essence of Jewish idealism. The idea of being a chosen people was inseparable from the Messiah: some day God would send his Son to deliver the Jews from all their spiritual and physical bondage. How strongly this message was felt by the various factions among the Jews is a moot question, but there is no doubt that regardless of their relation to Christian society, the "fact" of being a select people remained for each individual Jew a basic premise of his world-view.

The testimony of Alla Naximova in her memoirs is very revealing in defining the concept of chosen people:

> I am a Jewess, a full-blooded one, too, and I am proud of it. But unfortunately, I am Jewish by birth only, since I was never given my birthright of Jewish knowledge. My patents were Russian intellectuals, atheists, and freethinkers who believed in no religion.[101]

She goes on to tell of her baptism into Roman Catholicism,

[101] L. Schwarz, op. cit., p. xxviii.

and her subsequent longing to return to her people, the Jews, for she still retains the imperishable "Jewish spirit". "Jewish by birth only" suggests racial unity, but it is certainly much more. From the promise of God (Mosaic Law) to protect and ultimately free his children follows the brotherhood of all the Jews in one family.[102] Just as a natural brother can never repudiate his ties with his siblings, neither can the Jew renounce completely his ancestry. From this brotherhood of Jews, it is not far to the brotherhood of mankind and the fundamental "unity of the human spirit".[103] It is not unreasonable to assume that many Jews were attracted to enlightened doctrines not only because of their yearning for freedom but also because the humanitarianism of the age proclaimed that all men are by Natural Right equal. The importance of these general considerations is that there is ample reason to believe that the transition, or conversion, from Jew to Marxist was not as radical as it might first appear. It could well be argued that conversion to Christianity involved a much more drastic change in beliefs than did the transition to socialism or Marxism.

To venture another intellectual parallel, Brinton has pointed out that Marx's reaction to the crass individualism of the nineteenth-century economic man resulted in his emphasizing

[102] Gray, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

[103] L. Schwarz, op. cit., p. xxvi.

the collectivity over the interests of the individual. Comparing this statement with the affirmation that, "From the Jewish point of view, the public weal was better served by reticence than by self-expression.",[104] one should not be surprised that by the end of the nineteenth century, several movements, among them the Paole Zion, had united socialism and Jewish national aspirations. According to these plans, the new state of Israel was to be founded upon the principles of socialism, a society where each contributed his labor for the good of all.[105] At this same time, A. D. Gordon was preaching that "to labor on the sacred soil was to be religiously active", and a small band of East European Jews set out to the New World to found a society based on strict communism of the land.[106] By eliminating the anti-social, anarchistic aspect of revolutionary Marxism, Jewish socialism had become somewhat respectable.

There is in Judaism a profound feeling for the meaning of history. For the Jews, the present is to be viewed not in itself, but only in relation to the past traditions and the future of the Jewish people. In the present, the family is much more important than any individual therein; in the scope of history, the primary concern is with the whole family of Judaism. Whatever

[104] Ibid., p. xxv.

[105] Solomon Grayzel, A History of the Jews, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959, p. 633.

[106] Ibid., pp. 682-3.

interpretation of Marxism one may favor, it is impossible to deny that there is this same concern for the vastness of history, the importance of the collectivity over the individual, and the mission which is inherent in the processes of history. At least on the surface Marxism agreed quite well with Judaism, and in addition suggested a means by which the indefinite future could be brought within the control of men.

In the name of science, Karl Marx constructed an elaborate system of faith which compares well with the great religions of the modern world. Although the scientific basis of Marxism may be seriously questioned, its appeal has survived the age of bourgeois capitalism of the nineteenth century. For beneath the "respectable" surface of science lies the true source of Marxism's attraction: its hold on the imagination. In a comprehensive scheme of history the needs of a fragmented society are served; in its humanitarian ideals the cries of the disillusioned and the compassionate are acknowledged.

For many reasons, not the least of which is the spector of Soviet Communism, Marxism is more often discredited than appreciated by the people of the twentieth century. But not all have lost their capacity to transcend the ideologies of the time or to hope for the progress of human civilization to a higher stage. An outstanding statesman of our day, Jawaharlal Nehru, wrote in his autobiography:

> ...Russia apart, the theory and philosophy of Marxism lightened up many a dark corner of my mind. History came to have a new meaning for me. The Marxist interpretation threw a flood of light on it, and it became an unfolding drama with some order and purpose, however unconscious, behind it. In spite of the appalling waste and misery of the past and present, the future was bright with hope, though many dangers intervened.[107]

Unlike Nehru, most of us today see only the raging impatience of Marx and his hatred of the follies of mankind, ignoring his message for the future. For all its pseudo-science, Marxism embodies one imperative which must not be ignored; the present is not the best possible world nor should we be content with mere security and comfort for ourselves.

Finally, although the conversion of some of the Jews to Marxism involved much more than an exchange of one religion for another, both include an outlook on life which is essentially a hopeful vision. Even today there are a number of people for whom the ideals of the Enlightenment are not dead, just as there are some Christians who sincerely believe in the saving Grace of Christianity. Yet, for too many, religion is passé and Marxism is dead or dangerous in some way. Lacking an understanding of the meaning of Western civilization and steeped in the cauldrons

[107] Quoted in Hans Kohn, The Twentieth Century, The Macmillan Co., 1957, p. 229.

of nationalism and "scientism", twentieth century man is starved in a spiritual vacuum. Today, Marxism is left to the Soviet gristmill, the Jewish question is settled by a Hitler, and the solution to Negro rightlessness depends finally upon the national guard. Compared to these anachronisms of theory and practice, the alliance of Jewish intellectuals and Marxian parties takes on an aspect of natural harmony.

Bibliographical Essay

Primary sources on this topic, for the reasons noted in the conclusion, are quite rare. Yu. Martov's, Zapiski sotsial demokrata, Vol. I. Letopis' revolyutsii, No. 4. (St. Petersburg, Berlin, Moscow, 1922) has not yet been translated and, except for L. Haimson's, The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism (Harvard University Press, 1955), his Memoirs were not cited extensively by any of the other authors consulted. This first book (Kniga Pyervaya) was written between 1920 and 1922; apparently Martov intended to bring his memoirs up to date in a second volume, but this project, if it was commenced, was not completed. The first book concludes with Martov's return from exile in Siberia (1898).

For the "secondary" characters in this study, the sources were also in short supply. Trotsky's autobiography, My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography (New York, 1930), is readily available. Paul Akselrod's, Perezhitoe i peredumannoe, Vol. I. Letopis' revolyutsii, No. 14, (Berlin, 1923), was not available to me except through several extended quotations and a brief summary in Haimson's work cited above. One important collection of writings which reveals the attitudes and social condition of the Jews in Russia is Leo W. Schwarz (ed.), Memoirs of My People, (Philadelphia, 1945). Many of the selections are reminiscences

of émigrés who spent at least a part of their youthful years in the ghetto.

General histories of the Jewish people are numerous and perhaps equally useful for the period under consideration. Both Solomon Grayzel, A History of the Jews (Philadelphia, 1959), and Max L. Margolis and Alexander Marx, A History of the Jewish People (Philadelphia, 1945), contain valuable information, including chronological charts and thorough indexes. For the Russian Jews, S. M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, 3 Vol. (Philadelphia, 1916-20) is indispensable, especially volumes II and III. A Russian Jew, Mr. Dubnow lived for more than forty years in the intellectual centers of Russia and from this advantageous position was able to record many valuable insights concerning the Jews during this crucial period of their history. A useful but carelessly written work which borrows heavily from Dubnow's work is A. L. Patkin, The Origins of the Russian-Jewish Labor Movement (F.W. Cheshire; Melbourne, 1947). The first chapter of Solomon Schwarz, The Jews in the Soviet Union (Syracuse University Press, 1951) provides further information and interpretation concerning the Jews in pre-revolutionary Russia.

On antisemitism, one of the better recent works is the controversial book by Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York, 1959). Miss Arendt points out the characteristics of nineteenth-century antisemitism and the drastic consequences

of the Jews' peculiar position in European society. In the introduction to a re-publication of Werner Sombart's, The Jews and Modern Capitalism (The Free Press, 1951), Bert Hoselitz criticizes Sombart's theory of Jewish "racial" characteristics, but takes an equally controversial environmental stand. Both views provide stimulating reading. Solomon Schechter's essay in Studies in Judaism (New York, 1960) is a scholarly treatment of this special aspect of Jewish history.

Histories of the latter half of the nineteenth century are abundant. One of the better single-volume works is Carlton J. H. Hayes, A Generation of Materialism (New York, 1941); see also his A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe 2 Vol., (New York, 1937). Both Hans Kohn, The Twentieth Century (New York, 1957) and Jacques Barzun, Darwin, Marx, Wagner (Boston, 1941) locate the critical juncture for nineteenth-century thought at mid-century and find at that point the first important statements of theory from which twentieth-century ideologies have sprung. The last several chapters of Crane Brinton, Ideas and Men: The Story of Western Thought (New York, 1950) provide a stimulating analysis of the main trends in nineteenth-century ideas.

For Trotsky, biographical material is plentiful; Bertram Wolfe, Three Who Made A Revolution (Boston, 1961) and Isaac Deutscher, The Prophet Armed (New York, 1963) are both excellent.

A major work on this topic is Leopold H. Haimson, The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism (Harvard University Press, 1955). In addition to the brilliant sketches of Martov and Akselrod, his bibliographical notes are extremely useful. On Marx, of course, the material available is nearly endless. An adequate one-volume study of his life is Isaiah Berlin, Karl Marx: His Life and Environment (New York, 1959). A provocative, if somewhat dated, psychological analysis of Marx is Otto Rühle, Karl Marx: His Life and Work (New York, 1943). One should also consult the interesting interpretation of Marx's life in Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station (New York, 1940).

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